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## Contributed Notes.

### JOB AND MUSLIM COSMOGRAPHY.

In the cosmography of Islām, as in the cosmographies of India, the world is thought of as supported on a series of different things, each coming, stage-wise, under the other. In this note I will try to show that the nomenclature, at least, of some of these stages has been derived from the book of Job.

A good statement of this cosmographical idea is given in the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā* of ath-Tha'labī, who was known as a transmitter of traditions and a commentator on the Qur'ān, and who died A. H. 427 or 437 (Ibn Khall, I, p. 60, of de Slone's translation). His book is filled with the most extraordinary stories, but the view of the situation of the world given in it was and remains that of Islām. He says (p. 4 of Cairo edition of A. H. 1298) that the traditionalists by general consent, though in varying words, report that the earth is made in seven stories or stages, and that an angel is underneath holding it on his shoulders with his two outstretched hands. Under the angel is a bull with 70,000 horns and 40,000 feet, and the angel stands upon its hump. To give the angel sure foothold a green *Yāqūt* or sapphire is placed between the hump of the bull and its ears. The horns of the bull come out from the sides of the earth and are like prickles or fish-hooks under the Empyrean Throne. Its nose is in the sea, and it breathes once every day. When it breathes out it is flood-tide, and when it draws its breath back there is ebb. Under it is a green stone on which it stands, and under that again a great fish (*Nūn*), "and it is the mighty fish (*Ḥūt*), its *Ism* is لوتيا, its *Kunya* بلهوت, and its *Laqab* يهوت." This fish is upon the sea and the sea on the back of the wind (على متن الريح) and the wind upon power (القدرة). Then follows a story from Ka'b al-Aḥbār, a Jewish proselyte to Islām who died A. H. 32, of how Iblis tempted the fish to rebel, but how God reduced it again to obedience. In this story the fish is addressed يا لوتيا. A voice of scientific protest against all this may be worth noticing. It is that of Yāqūt, the geographer (d. A. H. 626), who in the introduction to his great geographical dictionary ridicules such narratives as stories of the *Quṣṣās*, professional reciters of wonderful tales for the amusement of the populace. These *Quṣṣās* manufactured traditions right and left to turn an honest penny (see on them at length Goldziher, *Muham. Studien*, II, pp. 153 *sqq.*, and *ZDMG.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 320), but the details of the Leviathan allusion here, to which I wish to draw

attention, with its knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, were a flight beyond street-corner reciters and must go back to older and more respected sources.

On pp. 132-42 of this same book by ath-Tha'labī the story of Job, or *Ayyūb*, is given<sup>1</sup> in the utmost wealth of detail. The principal part is on the authority of Wahb b. Munabbih, another converted Jew, who died A. H. 110, but there are references, too, to Ka'b and to others. Wahb's story is evidently based, though with most curious variations, on our book of Job. In it, in what corresponds to the speech of Yahwé in Job (chaps. 38-41), there occurs the following passage (p. 138): "Where wast thou on the day when I created **اليهموت**, his place is where the dust ceases, and **اللوتيا**, they two bear the mountains and cities and inhabited land, their tusks are like long fir trees and their heads like mountains and the fibers of their thighs like pillars of brass?"

I do not think there can be any doubt that **يهموت** here is a mis-transcription for **بهموت**, *i. e.*, **בהמות**, and **לوتيا** for **לויטא** or **לויטין**, *i. e.*, **לוייתן**. Such changes were certain to occur when names were written without diacritical points.<sup>2</sup> But what is **בלהמות**? The best I can suggest is **בלהות** *terrors*, which is a characteristic word in Job, occurring there five times and only five times elsewhere. Especially to be noted is the phrase **מלך בלהות** *king of terrors* (18:14), with its semi-mythological suggestions. It may be a point for inquiry whether this phrase in later Jewish literature has not received legendary amplification.

Finally, it should be said that both Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahb b. Munabbih, whom we have found in such suspicious surroundings, are regarded in traditional science as habit-and-repute liars. It is certain that the greater part of the Jewish legends which have found their way into Muslim mythology passed through their hands, and that these were carefully doctored by them and adapted to Muslim taste.

DUNCAN B. MACDONALD.

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<sup>1</sup> *AJSL.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 145 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> In my former paper (p. 146) I have pointed out how Eliphaz has become **اليفن**, Bildad (**بلدد**) مالك, and Zophar **ظافر**.